Acquisition of ships by SCI

3332. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Shipping Corporation of India had sought Government's approval to acquire more ships for it;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what is the total amount involved for acquiring new ships; and

(d) whether the SCI has sought financial assistance from Government to meet its target?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) has sought Government approval for the following projects:

2 Capesize Bulk Carriers;

6 Handymax Bulk Carriers;

2 Container Vessels of 4,300 TEU; and

6 LR-I size Product Tankers.

(c) The estimated cost of the above proposals is approx. Rs. 3200 crores.

(d) No, Sir.

First phase of National Highways project

†3333. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the work on first phase of National Highways project is moving at snails' pace;

(b)if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the remedial measures taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) No, Sir. However, there have been some

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

delays in some contracts due to problems associated with acquisition of land, shifting of utilities, law and order problems etc. The steps taken by the Government to expedite the projects are as under:

(i) The contracts are regularly monitored at various levels such as by Supervision Consultants, Project Directors, Senior Officers of National Highways Authority of India. Progress reviews are also held at the level of Minister, Shipping, Road Transport and Highways.

(ii) State Governments have appointed Senior Officers as nodal officers for resolving problems associated with implementation of the National Highways Development Project such as land acquisition, removal of utilities, forest/pollution/environment clearances etc. These nodal officers hold periodic meetings to review the projects and are taking action to resolve the problems.

(iii) A Committee of Secretaries has been constituted under Cabinet Secretary to address inter-ministerial and Central-States issues such as land acquisition, utility shifting, environment approvals, clearance of road overbridges etc.

(iv) The procedure of issue of land acquisition notification has now been simplified. Earlier all the notifications under National Highway Act were vetted by Ministry of Law. Recently, an amendment has been made to the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 by which these notifications are not required to be sent to the Ministry of Law. The Ministry of Law has approved the standard formats of various notifications keeping in view the similar nature of the notifications of land acquisition.

(v) To expedite the construction of road overbridges, an officer of the Railways has been posted to National Highways Authority of India to coordinate with the Railways; Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with M/s IRCON International Limited for implementation of some of the ROBs.

(vi) Action has been taken against non-performing contractors and they are not allowed to bid for future projects unless they improve the performance in existing contracts.

Announcement for sanction of road projects

3334. SHRI NANDIYELLAIAH: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state: